



News from

Councilmember Todd Gloria

City of San Diego — District Three

NEWS RELEASE

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Referendum Reform Measures Move Forward

Measures Would Increase Transparency, Prevent Further Abuse of System

SAN DIEGO, CA (May 14, 2015) – Councilmember Todd Gloria’s referendum reform proposals moved forward today, signaling a key step toward increased transparency and a return of the referendum process to voters.

“From the Barrio Logan Community Plan, to the linkage fee, to the minimum wage increase, we’ve seen several recent examples of wealthy interests using the referendum and deceptive methods to block progress in San Diego,” said Councilmember Gloria. **“The documented lies of paid signature gatherers and extreme levels of funding of out of town corporate interests raise concerns over our referendum process that are worth examining. Referenda are meant to be a legitimate check and balance by the people and not means for a special interests with deep pockets to buy results that could not be attained through the public legislative process.”**

This afternoon, Councilmember Gloria presented his proposals to the City Council Charter Review Committee, which unanimously directed staff to draft the requested changes to the City’s campaign laws and municipal code.

The Ethics Commission will explore revisions to the City’s Election Campaign Control Ordinance, with consideration given to the following revisions:

- Require all petitions to disclose major funders of referendum efforts and include “paid for by” language on each petition;
- Require independent expenditure reports to be filed to increase transparency of all funders of the effort;
- Require daily reports throughout the signature gathering period on funds received for the referendum effort; and
- Require a campaign comprehensive statement to be filed with City Clerk ten (10) calendar days after the signature gathering period starts.

These proposed changes would make the referendum process disclosures and filings more consistent with other campaign requirements.

The City Attorney’s Office and the City Clerk will draft an ordinance updating Municipal Code Article 7, Division 11, to include the following revisions:

- General updates to the language to ensure clarity, consistency, and correctness with the current state of the law;
- Moving the petition formatting section to the City Clerk Administrative Guidelines to be consistent with recent updates to Municipal Code recall section and to allow for easier and more timely updates of material;
- Updates and clarification of language in Section 27.1116: Withdrawal of Signature from Referendary Petition;

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- Clarification of language in Section 27.1117: Time for Submitting Referendary Petition to Clerk; and
- Clarification of timeline related to Council action on sufficient petitions.

Councilmember Gloria has been working with the City Attorney's Office, City Clerk and Ethics Commission to further explore local reforms since January. The changes are expected to come before the full City Council for consideration by the end of 2015.

The referendum process is also governed by state law, and Councilmember Gloria expressed his plan to advocate for additional reforms with state legislators.

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